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COLONIES AND TRADE.

N^{os} I and II.

FINE WOOL FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

The Large GOLD MEDAL, being the Premium offered, was this Session given to JOHN M'ARTHUR, Esq. of New South Wales, for importing into London, 15,130 lbs. of Fine Wool, the produce of his Flocks in that Colony.

The Large GOLD MEDAL, being the premium offered, was this Session given to JOHN M'ARTHUR, Esq. of New South Wales, for importing into London, the finest sample of Wool, the produce of his Flocks in that Colony, equal to the best Saxon or Spanish Wool.

Samples of the Wool have been placed in the Repository of the Society, as well as a piece of Broad-cloth manufactured of the same, by MESSRS. STARKY, BUCKLEY, & Co. of Huddersfield.

For some years after the establishment of the British colony, at Port Jackson, in New South Wales, the only

sheep which had been introduced were from Bengal, and the Cape of Good Hope. The fleece of both these breeds was composed of a coarse hairy wool, quite unfit to be manufactured, and which was employed by the settlers, chiefly in mortar for covering ceilings, and the sides of rooms, as the hair of cattle is used in this country. About the year 1795, shortly after the occupation of the Cape of Good Hope by the British forces, three or four pure Merino sheep which had been sent from Spain as a present to the Dutch governor, were transferred from the Cape to Port Jackson, by captain Kent of the Royal Navy. By him they were disposed of to Mr. M'Arthur, at that time a captain in a regiment stationed in the colony, and commanding at Paramatta.

Conceiving the climate of New South Wales admirably adapted to the growth of fine wool, Mr. M'Arthur was induced to pay particular attention to the crossing and increase of this breed of sheep, and their rapid progress fully answered his expectations. In 1804, during a temporary residence in England, some specimens of the Merino wool raised by him, were accidentally seen by a committee of manufacturers of woollen cloth, and, in consequence of a memorial presented by them to government, he was summoned before the privy council, by whom he was examined as to the state of his flocks, and the probability of their further improvement.

Their lordships were satisfied in these points; and thinking it an object of public importance to encourage in a British settlement the growth of fine wool, a regular supply of which was then with difficulty obtained from Spain, they recommended the subject to the attention of the secretary of state for the colonies, by whose directions grants of land were made to Mr. M'Arthur in a part of the settlement well adapted for sheep walks.

Mr. M'Arthur soon after returned to New South Wales, and carried with him several Spanish rams and ewes of the Escorial or the Negretta breed, purchased from the flocks of his late majesty. His exertions, however, were in a few years impeded by his departure from the colony; and it was not until his return in 1817, after an absence of eight years, that he resumed under his personal inspection, the plans he had originally devised. In this interval, however, the flocks had increased, and had improved upon his estates, and the production of wool soon became an object of interest to the settlers throughout the colony. To encourage this feeling, and to distribute the Merino breed amongst the farmers, Mr. M'Arthur established an annual sale at Paramatta, a town situated on the river which flows into Port Jackson, and about 15 miles from Sydney, the capital. In 1820, three hundred young Merino rams were supplied by this gentleman to government, for the purpose of introducing the same race into the dependent settlements in Van Diemen's Land, where those previously known were chiefly a cross between the Teeswater, and the Cape sheep, and whose wool was of a coarse and unproductive kind. The flocks in New South Wales usually consist of from 3 to 400 individuals, and range over the plains under the care of shepherds and dogs introduced from England and Spain. The principal part of Mr. M'Arthur's are kept upon an estate about 30 miles from Sydney, adjoining the Blue Mountains, where the soil is dry and productive. The foot rot is nearly unknown, and no disease of consequence has been ever prevalent amongst them. Within the last two years, extensive improvements have been carried on to afford the means of extending the flocks, and by increased care and selection of the breeding stock, to bring the fleeces to higher perfection.

It is admitted, that they already excel the parent race in

Spain, and there is every reason to expect a rapid improvement in the quality and condition of future importations. In the electoral dominions of the king of Saxony (which country is also indebted to Spain for the Merino breed) it is well known that from the coldness of the climate it becomes necessary to keep the flocks under sheds for eight or nine months of the year, during which period they are fed upon dry food, principally bran and hay. In New South Wales, from the mildness of the seasons, which closely resemble those of Madeira, this artificial treatment is unnecessary. The flocks remain in the open air day and night, and do not require the protection of sheds, or to be fed with the same trouble and expense as those of Saxony. The wool from New South Wales, has hitherto been sent to England in fleeces, and unsorted. In this state it is extremely difficult to compare it with Saxon wool, the fleeces of which are divided into five or six parts, forming as many different qualities, and are packed in separate bales. As the number of sheep increase in New South Wales, and experience is acquired, the same mode will probably be adopted there; but, at present, in order to institute an accurate comparison, the process of sorting should be followed. The importation of the present year is expected to be finer and better prepared for the market than any which has been heretofore sent home, and the high prices that have been lately obtained will certainly stimulate the exertions of all who desire to establish a valuable export to the parent country. The importance of it to the colony and to Great Britain may be estimated by considering that about 16 millions of pounds of foreign wool, and 144 millions of pounds of British wool, are annually consumed in our manufactures; that the value of woollens exported is more than 8 millions sterling, and

the consumption in the United Kingdom is supposed to amount to about 18 millions more; making in all 24 millions sterling per annum.*

For fine wool, Great Britain is now dependent upon Spain, Saxony, and Austria: by promoting its growth in New South Wales, we shall enjoy the advantage of raising in one of our own settlements a most valuable raw material, a portion of which will always be returned to the colony for consumption in its manufactured and ornamental state; thus establishing an intercourse beneficial to the grower, to the ship owner, and to the manufacturer at home. The extent of fine country already discovered in New South Wales, in length about 250 miles, and in breadth about 200 miles, affords pasturage of the best description.

It is probable that no better proof can be offered of the value of New South Wales' wool, than by inspecting the cloth sent to the Society by Messrs. Starkey, Buckley, & Co., who concur with other manufacturers in their testimony of its good qualities.† As a considerable quantity of olive oil is required in the manufacture of fine cloth, Mr.

* See Evidence before the Lords of Trade, page 2, and Returns to the House of Commons—Session 1821.

† The cloth above-mentioned, for which the Society bestowed on the manufacturers the Gold Isis Medal, was a piece of superfine blue of the ordinary width, made entirely from fine New South Wales' wool, purchased at the public sale of the same, in the year 1821. Mr. Starkey states that, independently of the fineness of fibre, the New South Wales' wool has the quality of being uncommonly soft to the touch, like fur; and hence, may be very advantageously used to mingle with Spanish and German wool of equal fineness; and thus, to correct a certain harshness, which even the very highest numbers of European wool are apt to possess, and which is very striking on comparison with the extreme softness of that from New South Wales.

M'Arthur has, amongst other exertions for his own benefit, and for that of the colony, introduced olive trees into New South Wales, and by late accounts, it appears that they flourish well, and have already produced some fruit, from which a small quantity of fine oil had been extracted by way of experiment.

The freight of wool from New South Wales is 3*d.* per *lb.* The duty 1*d.* per *lb.*

Mr. M'Arthur's wool was sent to the Society in the state in which it is imported, that is, in the entire fleece; but from the high character given of it by the principal wool-brokers of London, it appeared very desirable to have a quantity stapled or sorted. With this view, a bag was sent to Mr. Swaine, of the house of Swaine and Co., through which most of the Saxon wool is imported to this country. The sorting was performed by Mr. S. himself into four qualities, the three first of which were submitted to the examination of various persons skilled in the article. The finest, or No. 1, was pronounced by Mr. Swaine to be equal to the best quality of Saxon wool imported. The Saxon fleeces yield on an average about one-tenth of No. 1 wool, but those from New South Wales afford rather a smaller proportion.

The subjoined testimonials from Mr. Nowlan and from Messrs. Marsh and Ebsworth, preclude the necessity of saying any thing more on the subject.

18, St. James's Street,
16th March, 1822.

SIR;

IN compliance with your request, I have attentively examined the three samples of wool which you exhibited to me at the Society's house, the growth of New South Wales, and as far as the experience of twelve years

during which I have been connected with the manufacture of superfine cloth qualifies me to judge, I am of opinion that the first quality is superior to the best Spanish, and equal to the best Saxon wool imported into this country; the 2nd and 3rd sorts are excellent of their kind, and in good condition.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

A. Aikin, Esq.

T. NOWLAN.

Sec. &c. &c.

66, Coleman Street,
18th March, 1822.

SIR;

WE carefully examined the three samples of assorted New South Wales' wool which you left with us a few days since, and beg leave to state our opinion of their quality and value.

No. 1 is quite equal to the average quality of Saxon wool, denominated *Electoral*, and which has sold in this market during the last 12 months from 8 to 9s. per *lb.*

No. 2, equal to the average Saxon wools, denominated prime, and sold from 6s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. per *lb.*

No. 3, equal to the average Saxon wools, denominated seconds, and sold from 4s. 9d. to 5s. 9d. per *lb.*

Some few bales of Saxon wool have sold as high as 10s. 6d. per *lb.*, but the quantity has been inconsiderable and selected from a large number of flocks.

We are, respectfully, Sir,

John M'Arthur, Esq.

&c. &c. &c.

MARSH & EBSWORTH, Brokers.

N^o III.

WOOL FROM VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

The CERES SILVER MEDAL was this Session given to JOHN RAINE, Esq., of Great Coram Street, London, for his exertions in opening a Market for the WOOL OF VAN DIEMEN'S LAND, and in taking measures for Improving its Quality.

THE settlement of Van Diemen's land is a dependency of the colony of New South Wales. In the year 1820, Mr. Raine arrived there on commercial business, bringing with him twenty Merino rams for sale; he also made considerable purchases of the best wool at that time grown there, and brought to England 61 bales, weighing 17,606*lbs.* A sample was sent to the Society for examination, and in claim of the premium offered to the person who shall have imported the greatest quality of fine wool, [the produce of New South Wales. On investigating the subject, it appeared that Mr. Raine's wool was not of the quality known in the market by the name of fine wool, its value in the entire fleece being less than 2*s.* 6*d.* per *lb.*

The Society, however, to mark their approbation of the exertions of Mr. Raine to benefit the settlement by the introduction of Merino rams, have thought proper to present him with the Silver Ceres Medal.

N° IV.

SEA ELEPHANT OIL, FROM NEW SOUTH WALES.

The Large SILVER MEDAL was this Session given to JOHN RAINE, Esq., of Great Coram Street, London, for importing 400 Tons of SEA ELEPHANT OIL, PROCURED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE COLONY OF NEW SOUTH WALES. A Specimen of the Oil has been placed in the Society's Repository.

A GROUP of small islands, named Macquarrie's Islands, has recently been discovered to the South of Van Diemen's land. Thither Mr. Raine dispatched a ship properly equipped for the purpose of taking sea elephants, a large species of seal ; he had the good fortune to procure in six months as many of these animals as furnished 400 tons of oil. The oil on examination, both with regard to its capability of burning in

a lamp and of furnishing oil gas, appeared to be of about the same quality as good Southern whale oil. The Society in consequence of the addition thus made to the articles of export from the Colony of New South Wales, which at the same time multiplies the resources of the parent country in case of a scarcity of oil from other quarters, have given to Mr. Raine their large Silver Medal.